

# New Frontiers in Japan Studies

**Philip Seaton, Institute of Japan Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies**

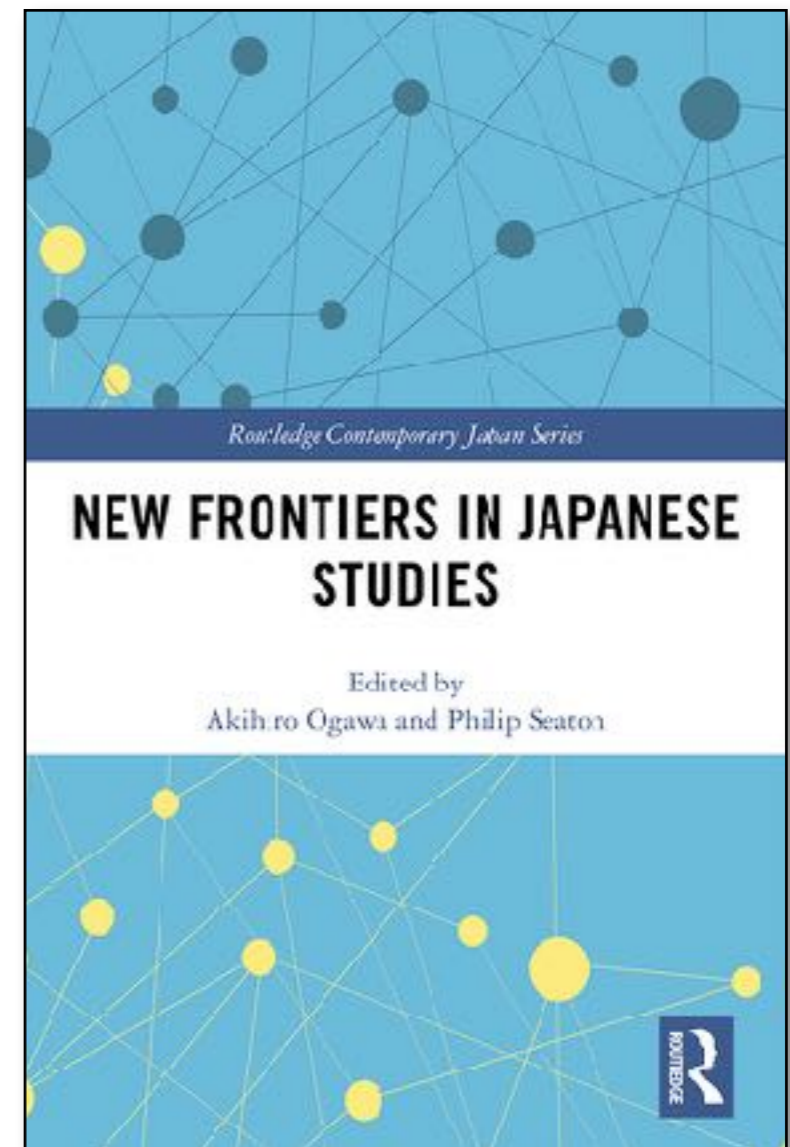


# Today's Lecture

- What is Japanese Studies?
- The Infrastructure of Japanese Studies
- How did we get here? A history of Japan Studies
- New Frontiers: Where are we going?

# Today's Lecture

- Based on “Introduction: envisioning new frontiers in Japanese Studies” by Akihiro Ogawa (Melbourne University) and me.
- Available open access. Please do access it via my website.
- Completed just before the “coronavirus shock”.
- New Frontiers 2 is coming soon ...



# Japan(ese) Studies Defined

“the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary study of Japan in the social sciences and humanities, in which analysis of Japan in domestic, international or comparative contexts using both Japanese and non-Japanese sources is disseminated to an international audience”

Ogawa and Seaton, 2020, p. 1.

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# The Infrastructure of Japan Studies

- University Departments and Courses

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Ateneo de Manila University

University of Melbourne

**etc.**

- Research Institutes

Nichibunken

German Institute for Japanese Studies

**etc.**

- Academic Societies

Association for Asian Studies

European Association for Japanese Studies

**etc.**

- Academic Journals

# Journals

- ***Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (1872)**
- ***Monumenta Nipponica* (1938)**
- *Journal of Asian Studies* (1941-1956, as *The Far Eastern Quarterly*)
- *Critical Asian Studies* (1968, as the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*)
- *Journal of Japanese Studies* (1974)
- *Japanese Studies* (1980)
- *Japan Forum* (1988)
- ***Japanstudien* (1988, now **Contemporary Japan**)**
- ***Japan Review* (1990)**
- ***Social Science Japan Journal* (1998)**
- *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (2002)

# Six Eras of Japan Studies

1. Early Imperial (to c. 1905)
2. Late Imperial (to c. 1945)
3. Postwar (to 1960s)
4. Internationalisation (from 1970s to 1980s)
5. Globalisation (from 1990s to 2010s)
6. New Frontiers (2020s onwards)



# Early Imperial (to c. 1905)

	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Japan research largely the preserve of 'amateurs' with some experience in Japan. Authorities on the distant, mysterious Orient. Development of Oriental learned societies.	Japanese travel abroad to learn from the West; treated there as 'representative living examples' of the culture.
Inside Japan	The colonial adventurer or expat; the eccentric who has 'gone native'; invited foreign experts ( <i>o-yatoi gaikokujin</i> ).	Objects of anthropological study introduced by Japanologists to their domestic audience.

# Late Imperial (to c. 1945)

	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	<p>Beginnings of Japanese language teaching in Western universities. Shift from ‘understanding the culture’ to ‘understanding the enemy/ally’ amidst increasing confrontation and ultimately war.</p>	<p>Handful of Japanese language teachers at Western universities; mass language education in Japan’s colonies.</p>
Inside Japan	<p>The scaling down of the Western presence as war approaches; Japan’s imperial power status and Pan-Asianism bring Asian students/intellectuals to Japan.</p>	<p>Intellectuals (e.g. Kyoto School) ended up supporting and disseminating nationalist positions on the road to war.</p>

# Postwar (to 1960s)

	<b>Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students</b>	<b>Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students</b>
<b>Outside Japan</b>	<p>Pioneers of area studies at Western universities. Professionalization of Japanese Studies. Cultural interpreters whose training and perspectives are rooted in the war years.</p>	<p>Era of restrictions on travel abroad by ordinary Japanese. Japan largely represented abroad by prewar migrants and their descendants.</p>
<b>Inside Japan</b>	<p>Occupation era workers, and post-occupation area studies pioneers in Japan for fieldwork.</p>	<p>An introspective era as Japan debates defeat and seeks new intellectual directions in the postwar.</p>

# Internationalisation (1970s to 1980s)

	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	<p>Proliferation of Japanese Studies journals and academic societies. Researchers are authorities on a distant but fast-growing economy. Pioneers of area studies in Asia look to Japan as a model.</p>	<p>Pioneers of autonomous study abroad; expatriate researchers teaching language and/or the social sciences &amp; humanities. Subordinate status as 'foreign lecturers'.</p>
Inside Japan	<p>Mainly Western language teachers who also write on Japanese society/culture. Subordinate status as 'foreign lecturers'.</p>	<p><i>Nihonjinron</i> discourse; domestic interpreters of the secrets of Japanese success whose voices reach abroad.</p>

# Globalisation (1990s to 2010s)

	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Holding the reins of academic power in Japanese Studies during the neoliberal educational era of rankings and 'impact factor journals'.	Emergence of the discipline-based Japanese researcher making their career abroad. Breakthrough of some into management.
Transnational	Massive increase in connectivity in the Internet era. Erosion of distinctions between 'Japanese' and 'foreign'. Increasing numbers of multicultural, multilingual researchers build international research careers with a focus on Japan in its international environment.	
Inside Japan	Interest in pop culture displaces interest in economic secrets of success as Japan grows into a major study abroad destination. Emergence of the discipline-based researcher making their career in Japan.	Japan-based scholars as international voices either via translation or publishing their work online (mainly) in English. Political and financial backing for 'Japanese Studies in Japan'.

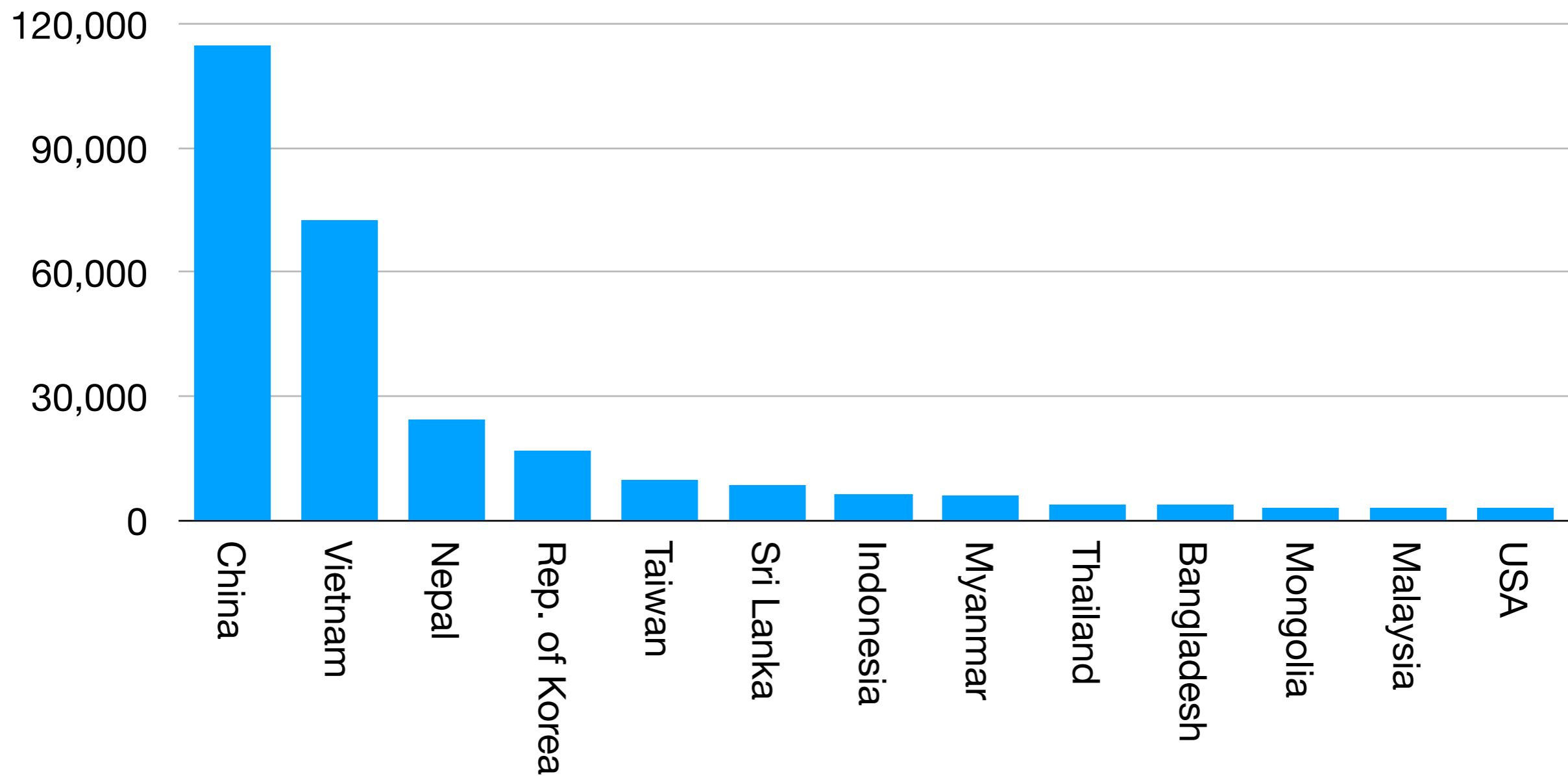
# New Frontiers (2020s onwards)

	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Diffusion of centres of power to scholars in countries outside the West, particularly in Asia. De-Westernization of Japanese Studies. Increased collaboration between Japanese Studies and the natural sciences.	The internationally mobile scholar whose reputation and seniority are increasingly unchained from nationality.
Transnational	Japanese Studies becomes ever more multicultural, multilingual, interdisciplinary and transnational in nature. Japan's role in combatting climate change (environment), and coping with an ageing society and migration (human mobility) emerge as core issues.	
Inside Japan	The internationally mobile scholar whose reputation and seniority are increasingly unchained from nationality. Breakthrough of some into management.	Japanese Studies reoriented towards global rather than domestic issues. Deepened relationships with Asia. Increased collaboration with researchers from the natural sciences.

# Japan Studies: Future Directions



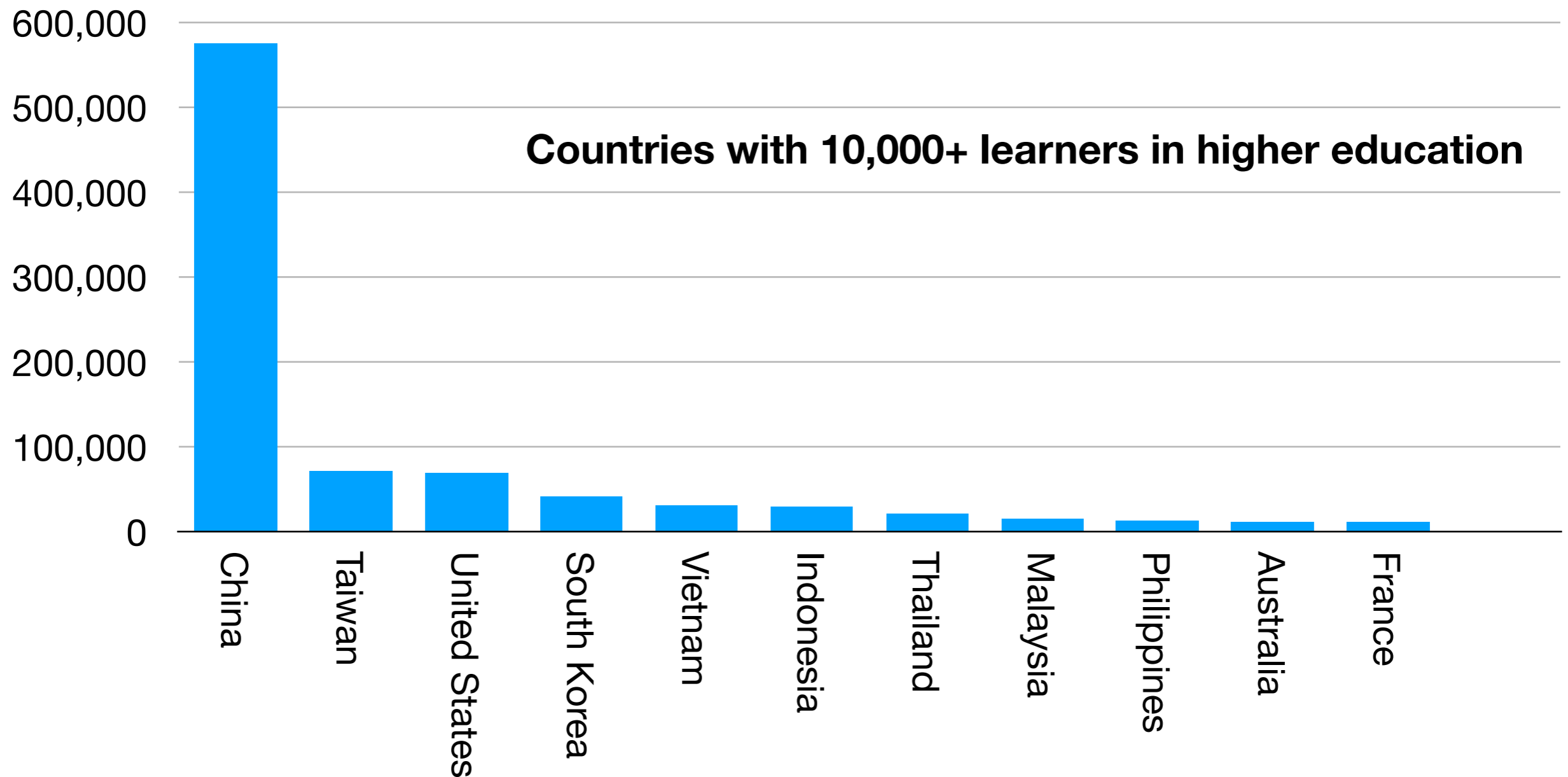
# International Students in Japan (2018)



Source: JASSO



# Language Learners in Higher Education (2018)



Source: Japan Foundation Survey on Japanese-Language Education Abroad

# Future Trends

1. A shift away from “Western” Japan Studies to “Asian” Japan Studies.
2. A shift from “demystifying Japan” to “understanding Japan in its transnational context”.
3. Japan as “unique” and “homogenous” is way out of date. Now the focus is Japan as “multicultural” and “diverse”.

# Future Topics

- The old topics (e.g. corporate life, pop culture, traditional culture, Japanese language/linguistics) will continue, but the new frontiers are:
  1. Japan and climate breakdown,
  2. Aging society, depopulation, post-growth society,
  3. Science-humanities interface (including AI etc),
  4. Japan in transnational, particularly Asian, contexts,
  5. Japan and Asian (in)security in the 21st century.

# Finally

- My career advice to all of you in Japanese Studies:
  1. **Have a discipline:** Be able to say “I am a historian”, “My specialization is sociology”. You need a methodology. Japan Studies is not a method.
  2. **Think big:** Do not limit yourself to a very narrow research area. Remember that if you end up teaching at university you need to offer introductory courses.
  3. **Think globally:** Remember that there is big world out there, and you need to know how Japan connects to it.